1. Method of automated searching for data or data-holding resources stored on a distributed system which comprises the following steps:

5      transmitting an enquiry containing one or more search terms to a search unit,

searching for data or data-holding resources stored on the system which satisfy the condition defined by the search terms, and

outputting the data, and/or information relating to the resources which hold such data, which is found in the search,

10      wherein the data stored on the system comprises a sequential time indicator relating to the point in time or period when the data is or was available on the system,

and wherein the search terms comprise a time parameter which confines the search to the point in time and/or period defined by the time parameter.

15    2.    Method according to claim 1,

**characterised in that**

if there is no time parameter the search is carried out simply among the data currently made available by the resources.

20    3.    Method according to claim 1,

**characterised in that**

in the event of the search producing a unique result the data found is output directly.

4.    Method according to claim 1,

25      **characterised in that**

in the event of a plurality of data records or data-holding resources being found which satisfy the condition defined by the search terms, a list or graphic overview of the data records found or of the resources which hold the data found is output.

30    5.    Computer program for carrying out a method of automated searching for data or data-holding resources stored on a distributed system according to claim 1.

6.    Computer program according to claim 5,

35      **characterised in that**

it is an add-on program for a search engine for searching for data or data-holding resources stored on a distributed system.

7. Search engine for automated searching for data or data-holding resources stored on a distributed system,

wherein the search engine is designed

to receive an enquiry containing one or more search terms,

to search on the system for data or data-holding resources which satisfy the condition defined by the search terms, and

to output the data found in the search, and/or the information relating to the resources which hold said data, which is found in the search,

wherein the data stored on the system includes a sequential time indicator relating to the point in time or period when the data is or was available on the system,

and wherein the search terms comprise a time parameter which confines the search to the point in time and/or period defined by said time parameter.

8. Search engine according to claim 7,

**characterised in that**

it searches for data or resources which satisfy the condition(s) defined by the search term(s) in a memory connected to it which makes references to the data or data-holding resources present on the system.

9. Search engine according to claim 7,

**characterised in that**

if there is no time parameter the search is carried out simply among the data currently made available by the resources.

10. Method of accessing resources on a distributed system and of receiving and/or displaying data stored on said resources,

wherein the data stored on the system contains a sequential time indicator relating to the point in time or period when the data is or was available on the system

and wherein, when the data is displayed, the information contained in the time indicator can be shown at the same time.

11. Method according to claim 10,

**characterised in that**

the sequential time indicator forms an expansion of the locator for addressing the data.

5 12. Computer program for carrying out a method of accessing resources on a distributed system and of receiving and/or displaying data stored on said resources according to claim 10.

13. Computer program according to claim 12,

10 **characterised in that**

it is an add-on program for a browser for accessing resources on a distributed system and for receiving and/or outputting data stored on said resources.

14. Browser for accessing resources on a distributed system and for receiving and/or

15 displaying data stored on said resources,

wherein the data stored on the system contains a sequential time indicator relating to the point in time or period when the data is or was available on the system,

and wherein, when the data is displayed, the information contained in the time indicator can be shown at the same time.

20

15. Method of accessing resources on a distributed system and of receiving and/or displaying data stored on said resources,

wherein the data stored on the system contains a sequential time indicator relating to the point in time or period when the data is or was available on the system,

25 and wherein access to the data or the data-holding resources on the system takes place as a function of a presettable time parameter.

16. Method according to claim 15,

**characterised in that**

30 the time indicator forms an expansion of the locator for addressing the data.

17. Method according to claim 15,

**characterised in that**

if there is no time parameter it is simply the data currently made available by the

35 resources which is accessed.

18. Method according to claim 15,

    **characterised in that**

    in the event that no data whose sequential time indicator meets the condition preset by the time parameter is available on the resource which is accessed, an archive for archiving data is accessed.

19. Method according to claim 15,

    **characterised in that**

    in the event that no data whose sequential time indicator meets the condition preset by the time parameter is available anywhere on the system, data which is or was available before or after the point in time or period specified by the time parameter is automatically accessed.

20. Computer program for carrying out a method of accessing resources on a distributed system and of receiving and/or displaying data stored on said resources according to claim 15.

21. Computer program according to claim 20,

    **characterised in that**

    it is an add-on program for a browser for accessing resources on a distributed system and for receiving and/or outputting data stored on said resources.

22. Browser for accessing resources on a distributed system and for receiving and/or displaying data stored on said resources,

    wherein the data stored on the system contains a sequential time indicator relating to the point in time or period when the data is or was available on the system,

    and wherein access to the data or the data-holding resources on the system takes place as a function of a time parameter presettable for the browser.

23. Method of archiving data stored on a distributed system which comprises the following steps:

    calling up or receiving data from the distributed system,

    adding to the data a sequential time indicator relating to the point in time or period when the data is or was available on the system if the data does not as yet have a

sequential time indicator, and

archiving the data in a data archive or a repository in such a way that the data can be accessed by search engines, browsers or programs.

5  24. Method of archiving data stored on a distributed system which comprises the following steps:

calling up or receiving data from the distributed system,

adding to the data a sequential time indicator relating to the point in time or period when the data is or was available on the system if the data does not as yet have a

10  sequential time indicator, and

archiving the data in a data archive or a resource in such a way that the data can be accessed by search engines, browsers or programs and

archiving an item of verification information relating to the data in a repository.

15  25. Method according to claim 23 or 24,

**characterised in that**

archiving of the data or the item of verification information in the repository takes place in such a way that any manipulation of the archived data or verification information is ruled out or any manipulation which there may be can be detected

20  when data archived on the resources is called up.

26. Method according to either of claims 23 and 24,

**characterised in that**

the archiving of the data takes place at the instigation of a user.

25

27. Method according to either of claims 23 and 24,

**characterised in that**

the repository archives the data at the instigation of a resource.

30  28. Method according to either of claims 23 and 24,

**characterised in that**

the repository archives the data on its own initiative following a preset scheme.